

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows.

Claims 1-44. (Canceled)

45. (Currently Amended) An isolated HCV antibody specifically binding recognizing a type 3 HCV antigen selected from the group consisting of:

(i) an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 140 to 319-191 of the Core Core/E1 region of HCV type 3a,

(ii) ~~an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 1556 to 1650 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a,~~

(iii) ~~an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 1632 to 1764 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a,~~

(iv) ~~an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 1556 to 1764 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a,~~

(v) ~~an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 1 to 115 of the Core region of HCV type 3c; and~~

(vi) ~~an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 2661 to 2753 of the NS5B region of HCV type 3c;~~

wherein any of the antigens in (i) to (iv) antigen contains at least one HCV genotype 3a-specific amino acid or wherein any of the antigens in (v) or (vi) contains at least one HCV genotype 3c-specific amino acid.

46. (Currently Amended) The HCV antibody according to claim 45 wherein said

antigen is consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from

- (i) the region spanning positions 140 to 191 319 of the Core~~Core/E1~~-region of HCV type 3a identified by SEQ ID NOs: 14, 16, 18, 20, 24,
- (ii) ~~the region spanning positions 1556 to 1650 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a identified by SEQ ID NO:30,~~
- (iii) ~~the region spanning positions 1632 to 1764 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a identified by SEQ ID NOs:32, 36,~~
- (iv) ~~the region spanning positions 1556 to 1764 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a identified by SEQ ID NO:223,~~
- (v) ~~the region spanning positions 1 to 115 of the Core region of HCV type 3c identified by SEQ ID NO:148, and~~
- (vi) ~~the region spanning positions 2661 to 2753 of the NS5B region of HCV type 3c identified by SEQ ID NO:150,~~

wherein the antigen ~~any of the antigens in (i) to (iv)~~ contains at least one HCV genotype 3a-specific amino acid ~~or wherein any of the antigens in (v) or (vi) contains at least one HCV genotype 3c-specific amino acid.~~

47. (Previously Presented) The HCV antibody according to claim 45 which has been produced upon immunization of a mammal with any of said antigens.

48. (Previously Presented) The HCV antibody according to claim 45 which is a monoclonal antibody.

49. (Previously Presented) A humanized version of an HCV antibody according to claim 48.

50. (Currently Amended) The humanized version of an HCV antibody according to claim 49 which has been ~~is being~~ humanized by means of recombinant DNA technology.

51. (Currently Amended) The HCV antibody according to claim 45 which~~which is~~ further comprising a label.

52. (Previously Presented) The HCV antibody according to claim 51 wherein said label is of the enzymatic, fluorescent or radioactive type.

53. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising an HCV antibody according to claim 45.

54. (Previously Presented) A kit for determining the presence of HCV antigens present in a biological sample, said kit comprising:

- (a) at least one HCV antibody according to claim 45,
- (b) a buffer enabling the binding reaction between an HCV antibody of (a) and an HCV antigen present in said biological sample; or components necessary for producing said buffer,
- (c) a means for detecting the immune complexes formed between an HCV

antibody of (a) and an HCV antigen present in said biological sample.

55. (Previously Presented) A kit for determining the presence of HCV antigens present in a biological sample, said kit comprising at least one HCV antibody according to claim 45.

56. (Previously Presented) A method for determining the presence of HCV antigens present in a biological sample, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) contacting said biological sample with at least one HCV antibody according to claim 45,
- (b) detecting the immune complexes formed in (a),
- (c) inferring from (b) the presence of said HCV antigens in said biological sample.